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# **Japanese Lesbians: Alive- but in the Shadows**

Japanese lesbians are celebrating the love of women, but in a quieter manner than their Western counterparts. In fact, it is hard to find any literature or art on lesbianism in Japan. Homosexual males fair better since there are considerably more written works on the subject. Why?

Japanese society seems to be hard on females. There is very strong evidence to suggest that a female is not considered an adult, unless she is married with at least one child. To further complicate matters, Japanese law does not acknowledge homosexuals and marriage must exist between a man and a woman. The message to young women is clear, you are not a 'real' woman until you are married to a man

and have 'his' child. The Japanese have a word for this, (ryosai kenbo) meaning "good mother, wise mother." Females are not fully sexual beings and sex is about producing children and satisfying the man as head of the household.

## **Finding Words for Homosexuality**

For many years, the word "dosei," was used for both male and female same-sex love. Then, the word "rezubian" was introduced, sometimes reduced to "rezu." There is an

English equivalent for dyke "daiku" but it often holds negative connotations.

Like most pornography, Japanese porn contains 'movie lesbians.' Like in Western society (and elsewhere) they are exaggerated and unrealistic women, formed in the image and likeness of males. Many lesbians refuse to use the word "rezubian" as it gets such a negative and "unnatural" image. "Porn rezubians" are viewed as sex crazed, emotionally unbalanced, and crossing and encouraging others to step over the boundaries of "normal sex." The message is clear, they are inferior to the "good wife and wise mother" ideal.

## **Females in the Workplace**

In the majority of cases, the workplace mirrors the traditional family.

Most males hold the top jobs, while females are subordinate.

It is estimated that 90% of women in Japan will marry. A 'hidden' [lesbian](#) is presumed to be a single, heterosexual woman, who will eventually marry. Married women are often forced to leave a company. Public

Housing is geared towards married couples. Marriage secures privileges and rights in society.

## **Lesbian Activism:**

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Only one group, “Regumi,” doseiai,” was used for both male and female same-sex love. is openly known, but lesbians are often afraid to be seen visiting or associating with the organization. Hundreds of years of patriarchy is hard to combat or co-exist alongside.

But, look below at the events. Lesbians are alive and thriving. To all our lesbian sisters, greetings. It would be nice to travel and meet you.

*Paula, 2014, stories4hotbloodedlesbians.com*